

For Immediate Release

Contact: (Your Name and telephone number)

Prepare before the first Winter Snow Storm....

Your Family Disaster Plan Can Keep You Snug and Safe!

If you knew a disaster was coming, wouldn't you make preparations to protect yourself and your family? While we may not know when the first ice storm is coming, you can take steps to keep your family safe now. The first step is updating your family's disaster plan, learn and follow some simple winter safety rules, (**put your name and title here**) of the (**your community**) Emergency Management Agency advises.

Family Disaster Plan

During a year, there are a lot of potential disasters that could impact your family: a Hazardous Material accident could force your family to evacuate your home; a winter storm, an earthquake or tornado could cut off basic services such as gas, water, electricity or phone service.

There are six basic types of supplies you should have packed in a special container (such as a large trash container, a backpack or a duffle bag) in case of a natural or man-made disaster. Those supplies include:

- * Water - store one gallon per person per day
- * Ready to eat canned food, canned juices, high-energy foods, vitamins, comfort foods and of course special foods for infants or family members on a special diet
- * First aid supplies including bandages, antiseptic, soap, latex gloves, non-prescription drugs such as aspirin, antacid, anti-diarrhea medication, etc.
- * Clothing and bedding to include sturdy shoes, rain gear, blankets, hats, gloves, thermal underwear and sunglasses
- * Tools and emergency supplies such as: battery operated radio, flashlights, fire extinguisher, pliers, shut off wrench, matches in a water proof container, liquid soap, personal items, household chlorine bleach
- * and special items for an infant, medication for family members, books and games for entertainment and important family documents.
- * Always keep your gas tank full!

Winter Storm Preparations

One of the key rules is to keep ahead of the weather this winter by listening to the latest weather reports on local radio and television. In preparing for a severe storm or blizzard, you should have the following items readily on hand at home:

- *Several days supply of non-perishable food and drinking water.
- *Extra blankets.
- *A battery operated radio.
- *A flashlight and fresh supply of batteries.
- *An emergency or backup heating system.

Be sure to check for an adequate supply of heating fuel and be aware of the fire hazards posed by the prolonged use of stoves, fireplaces and space heaters.

The safest place to be during a winter storm or cold snap is indoors. Dress properly before venturing outdoors. Wear several layers of loose fitting, lightweight clothing. Outer garments should be tightly woven, water repellent, and hooded.

Avoid overexertion when outdoors, including when snow shoveling. Be aware that cold weather itself, without any physical exertion, puts an extra strain on the heart.

Safety Checks for Your Vehicle

Before severe storms and cold arrive, all vehicles should be winterized with particular attention to the engine, fuel, ignition and exhaust systems. Make sure that tires and brakes are in good condition and that the heater, windshield wipers and lights are working properly. Also check the antifreeze level and **always keep the gas tank filled**.

Each vehicle should be equipped with an emergency winter storm kit which should include: non-perishable foods, extra clothes, blankets, a flashlight, fresh batteries, a shovel, booster cables, flares, and bags of sand.

Motorists who become stranded in their vehicles should never try to walk to safety. Conserve fuel and heat by running the heater and engine sparingly. To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, open a car window slightly and periodically clear the snow away from the exhaust pipe.

By following the safety measures and staying prepared during cold weather and storm, you can avoid the fatal effects of winter during the next few months.